



GISR-ORSAM JOINT REPORT

Online Roundtable Report: Türkiye – Gulf Relations and Post-Ceasefire Gulf Security

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Executive Summary

This roundtable, the first co-organised by GISR and ORSAM, explored the increasingly critical and evolving strategic partnership between Türkiye and Qatar, identifying it as a central pillar of the emerging regional security framework. Participants agreed that the relationship is a model of South-South and Muslim-Muslim cooperation, built on deep political trust and shared visions. Key conclusions highlight its role in mediation, conflict resolution, and shaping the post-war order in Gaza. The discussion also emphasised the need for a “maximalist” approach to regional cooperation to address the intertwined challenges of security and economic development, while also acknowledging the lack of homogeneity in the GCC grouping and the presence of internal stresses that may warrant a somewhat cautious approach.

Key Discussion Points

The two countries have strengths that complement each other and commonalities, such as shared interests, a vision for the region, and a common religion. Türkiye has a unique geopolitical position in the evolving multipolar world and boasts strong diplomatic, military, and institutional capacities, while Qatar, with its soft power, diplomatic prowess, good international reputation, and financial resources, is emerging as an important regional actor. Both nations pursue the policy of ‘strategic autonomy’, seeking to maintain healthy relations with all global and regional superpowers. The influence the leaders of the two countries have on the Trump administration also places them in a unique position to shape the United States' role in the region. Most importantly, this cooperation and strategic relation between the two countries is not viewed as an axis against anyone. From Qatar’s perspective, Türkiye plays the role of a constructive balancer against the other regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt and Israel.

Türkiye increasingly views its national security as being inseparable from Gulf security and Qatar as a partner who contributes to ensuring regional stability in line with Türkiye's strategic autonomy doctrine. This is reflected in Türkiye's growing military partnerships and defence industrial cooperation across the Middle East.

It was argued that the bilateral partnership could expand to potentially include other players such as Egypt, thereby laying the foundations for a new **minilateral** regional mechanism to address various regional and even global conflicts. One participant defined minilateralism as the process by which countries that are not necessarily part of the same geographic region come together to achieve a common goal. However, it was repeatedly noted that GCC is not a homogeneous bloc and that the individual Gulf states have divergent threat perceptions and foreign policies, complicating a unified approach to regional security. While, conceptually, the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council are united under the GCC umbrella in Riyadh, they perceive threats individually rather than collectively. One participant took the argument further, suggesting that the conflicting interests and suspicions among countries in the region warrant a more cautious approach to the scope and scale of the Qatar-Türkiye axis.

There is a significant potential for the two countries to formalise and enhance their joint mediation efforts, with identified opportunities in Somalia, Sudan, and between Pakistan and Afghanistan. On the issue of post-ceasefire Gaza, it was widely acknowledged that Türkiye and Qatar are expected to play a central role in Gaza's reconstruction, humanitarian coordination, and shaping its future political order. Syria is another important country where the two can play a critical role. Participants also pointed out that this partnership offers a counter-balance to Israel's influence in the region, a fact that Israel is well aware of and that is likely behind the maligning and disinformation campaign it has launched against the duo.

A key recommendation was the establishment of an annual strategic dialogue between Türkiye and the Gulf states (starting at the think-tank level) to build trust, address misunderstandings, and foster wider cooperation. Participants urged moving from abstract discussions to concrete collaboration, such as jointly developing governance models for Gaza, co-publishing research on mediation, and deepening defence technology cooperation.

Conclusion

The roundtable concluded that the Türkiye-Qatar partnership is a resilient and dynamic force in a rapidly changing region. It is a beacon in a fragmented region that is otherwise rife with conflict, chaos, and uncertainty. While challenges remain—including differing perceptions among Gulf states and the immense political hurdles in Gaza—the alliance is well positioned to influence the regional order. The discussions underscored a collective view that through sustained dialogue and deepened cooperation, Türkiye and Gulf actors can be central to fostering a more stable, secure, and self-reliant Middle East.